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CIA-MCMAHON

WASHINGTON (AP) -- THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE TODAY APPROVED PRESIDENT REAGAN'S NOMINATION OF JOHN N. MCMAHON, A CAREER INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CIA.

BY UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE PANEL SENT MCMAHON'S NOMINATION TO THE SENATE FLOOR FOR CONFIRMATION.

CHAIRMAN BARRY GOLDWATER, R-ARIZ., AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE STRONGLY PRAISED MCMAHON, 52, FOR THE EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONALISM HE HAS BUILT UP DURING A 24-YEAR CAREER WITH THE CIA.

BUT SEN. JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., D-DEL., CAUTIONED MCMAHON THAT HE WILL FACE A ''HEAVY BURDEN'' IN SUCCEEDING ADM. BOBBY R. INMAN AS THE CIA'S NO. 2 OFFICIAL.

''MY GREATEST FEAR IS THE POLITICIZING OF THIS AGENCY,'' BIDEN SAID, TELLING MCMAHON: ''WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU TO BE STRAIGHT WITH US. ... WE WANT RAW ASSESSMENTS, NOT POLITICAL JUDGMENTS.''

BIDEN NOTED THAT HE AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE STILL HAVE ''LINGERING DOUBT'' ABOUT WHETHER CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM J. CASEY HAD PROVIDED THE PANEL WITH ''THE WHOLE TRUTH'' DURING EARLIER HEARINGS.

MCMAHON WORKED ON THE CIA'S U-2 SPY PLANE PROGRAM AND LATER MOVED TO TOP POSTS IN ELECTRONIC INTELLIGENCE, TECHNICAL SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION AND ON THE STAFF THAT COORDINATES ALL U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.

HE TESTIFIED THAT WHILE THE SOVIET UNION MUST REMAIN ''OUR FIRST INTELLIGENCE PRIORITY,'' THE UNITED STATES NEEDS TO ''APPRECIATE FULLY THE BROAD RANGE OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS FORCES WHOSE INTERACTION WILL SHAPE WORLD EVENTS.''

MCMAHON STRESSED THAT ''THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY INVOLVING AMERICANS ARE, AND MUST CONTINUE TO BE, LIMITED, SUBJECT TO STRICT STANDARDS OF ACCOUNTABILITY, AND FAR REMOVED FROM ANY ABRIDGMENT OF CHERISHED CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.''

THE SENATE COMMITTEE EARLIER HELD A CLOSED HEARING TO QUESTION MCMAHON ABOUT CLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE MATTERS.

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